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The Theme of the Issue:

SCIENTIFIC AND EDUCATIONAL POTENTIAL OF THE USSR AND RUSSIA
IN THE TWENTIETH – FIRST QUARTER OF THE XXI CENTURY:
EXPERIENCE OF TRANSFORMATI

FROM THE EDITORS

The focus in this issue of the journal on the historical experience of the transformations of the domestic scientific and educational potential in the 20th century is prompted by its high demand from both the scientific community, which requires constant reflection and updating of retrospective expert assessments of the path traveled, and the understanding by society and state institutions of the significance and importance of this subject area. This area is fundamentally crucial in the structure of factors that determine the actual economic, cultural, and defense potential of the country concerning the needs of its existence and ensuring sustainable development. Science, in its inseparable connection with educational institutions, has been and continues to be the foundation for the formation, accumulation, and reproduction of people and their ideas, which are a qualitative component of the country's human capital.

The country entered the 20th century with prospects for gradual enhancement of its scientific, technological, and educational potential, which was then interrupted for the next fifty years by extreme periods of world wars and revolutionary upheavals. During these times, there was not only the accumulation and application of intellectual labor but also, at certain moments, its waste and partial destruction of its bearers. Not all state projects aimed at reforming the fields of science and education during the Soviet era turned out to be successful. However, the objective needs and positive trends in the development of these spheres ultimately led the authorities to abandon various destructive decisions. The transitions between states of survival, recovery, and subsequent development of social institutions of science and education in the 20th century testify to their value and enduring significance for our country.

The articles presented for the reader's attention in this issue of the journal are divided into the following thematic sections: "Research on Domestic Scientific and Educational Institutions", "Historians on Scientists", "Open Archives", "World of Books", "In Memoriam: Varlen Lvovich Soskin (1925–2021)".

The first of the mentioned sections opens with an article dedicated to the Imperial Tomsk University. Based on archival documentation, the author reconstructs the process of creating the university charter and explores the reasons for its uniqueness, which initially granted the university a special status within the higher education system of the Russian Empire. The subject of analysis in other articles in the section includes various aspects of studying scientific and educational institutions, including the role of culture in the 1920s, the general education school in the RSFSR in the 1930s, the establishment and development of the first technical institute in Novosibirsk, the 220th anniversary of the USSR Academy of Sciences, the Soviet historical community, the creation of the Forest Institute of the Siberian Branch of the Academy of Sciences in Krasnoyarsk and the emergence of Siberian forestry in the 1958–1970s, the third session of the Soviet-Chinese Scientific Council on the Amur River basin issue, a historiographical overview of recent domestic literature on the formation of the early Soviet electoral system, comparative characteristics of Siberian (Novosibirsk and Tomsk) national research universities, and the boundaries of transferring the model of the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology to Novosibirsk State University during its initial establishment period.



The last article in the section “The Importance of Continuity in Teaching and Researching Domestic History at Novosibirsk State University (1960s – Early 21st Century)” examines the sources of forming and further replenishing the scientific and pedagogical staff that ensured the continuity of teaching and research in the field of domestic history within the relevant department of the Humanities Faculty (now the Humanities Institute) of Novosibirsk State University over more than sixty years of its existence.

The section “Historians on Scientists” includes articles about the outstanding scientist and simultaneously active political and state figure in the late imperial period, Academician V.I. Vernadsky; about the pre-revolutionary stage in the formation of the well-known historian and Siberian researcher N.N. Kozmin, an active participant in the regional movement, who perished during the Great Terror; about Professor N.Ya. Novombergsky, one of the ideologists of developing the principles of regional planning in Siberia in the 1920s, who was later subjected to repressions; and about Academician A.P. Ershov, who actively developed and implemented the national program for the informatization of education.

In the section “Open Archives” new materials concerning the reform of higher education in 1921–1922 are introduced into scientific circulation one of the outcomes of which was the Bolsheviks’ rejection of the principle of university autonomy in Soviet Russia. Another documentary study is dedicated to A.Ya. Vyshinsky’s speech on December 27, 1930, at the opening session of the State Scientific Council of the People’s Commissariat of Education, discussing the outcomes of the trial of the “Prompartiya” during which a group of prominent representatives of the country’s scientific and technical intelligentsia faced accusations of mythical “sabotage”.

The last section provides a review titled “Successful Experience of Integrating Science and Education” which discusses the monograph “Novosibirsk State University: The First Decade (1959–1968)”, authored by V.A. Vybornova and M.P. Fedoruk, set to be published in 2024. The review notes that the publication of such a study marks a significant event in the exploration of the historical experience of scientific and educational transformations during the Soviet era, reflecting the vivid phenomenon of the birth and development of the integration of science and education in the eastern part of the country in the Novosibirsk Academic Town.

The memorial section “Ad Memoriam: Varlen Lvovich Soskin (1925–2021)” is dedicated to the life and work of the prominent scholar and researcher of the history of domestic culture and the intelligentsia during the Soviet era, Varlen Lvovich Soskin, whose centenary is celebrated this year. Three thematic publications by historians from Novosibirsk and Omsk unveil the dynamics of his creative pursuits, including those related to a turning point in the scholar’s professional work, which led to his transition from studying general issues of the history of Soviet culture and the intelligentsia to the development of problems in the social history of domestic science. Other articles analyze Professor V.L. Soskin’s role in establishing a scientific school since the early 1970s, highlighting the influence of the Novosibirsk scientific school of social cultural studies on regional research in the history of culture and the intelligentsia of Siberia. The specifics of V.L. Soskin’s academic interactions with Omsk historians are also illustrated. Alongside research articles, the section includes documents about his scientific activities, photographs, and memories of him.

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